

CHP investigates additional case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (February 22), the CHP is investigating one additional case of COVID-19, taking the number of confirmed cases to 69 and number of probable case to 1 in Hong Kong so far.

The confirmed case today involves a 96-year-old woman (the 70th case) with underlying illness who lives in Fly Dragon Terrace, 26-32 Tin Hau Temple Road, Tin Hau. She developed fever and cough since February 13. She sought medical attention at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) today and was admitted for treatment. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus and is now in a stable condition. She had no travel history during the incubation period. Her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter who live with her are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the patients of the 65th case announced earlier and the 70th case today had both visited a Buddhist temple named Fook Wai Ching She in Maylun Apartments, 1-25 Shu Kuk Street, North Point in January and February. Those who also had visited the temple during the above period and develop relevant symptoms later, and the taxi driver who drove the patient from her home to PYNEH at around 2.30 am today are urged to call the CHP hotline.

After the activation of Serious Response Level under the "Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance", the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health had been closely liaising with the Police to prepare for the activation of the Major Incident Investigation and Disaster Support System (MIIDSS). Taking into consideration the latest development of the local cases of COVID-19, the CHP has been in contact with the Police to activate the MIIDSS, providing support and assistance on CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing for confirmed cases.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see annex.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, some of the confirmed cases are locally infected. The CHP strongly urged the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community."

The spokesman said, "On the personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes. The public should go out less and reduce social activities, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); after using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province and Health Bureau of Macao.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 18 859 calls were received.

A dedicated webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv) has been set up by the CHP. Information including the latest local situation, list of buildings and list of flights/trains/ships relevant to the confirmed cases, countries/areas with reported cases as well as health advice and a local situation interactive map dashboard are available on the webpage to help the public grasp the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province where community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of COVID-19. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.